

**IARSLCE Conference, September 2012**  
**Comments shared by sponsor John von Knorring (Stylus Publishing)**  
**Lunch program, Monday September 24**

Dis-inter-mediation. It's a word that has entered my vocabulary of late

Disintermediation is how we in the old print media – book publishers like me, but also broadcasters or movie makers – refer to “creative destruction”, that concept of so extolled by market economists and today's entrepreneurs that I believe was originally coined by Karl Marx (but that's a whole other story).

When the Web displaces newspapers; when streaming media and cable channels disrupt network television; and when a savvy bunch of graduate students create a smart online Wiki for this conference's proceedings – and forever consign *printed* proceedings to the incinerator of history: *that's* creative destruction

Since I had a small hand in supporting this work of disintermediation, I very briefly want to say two things while I have your attention:

First, to recognize the creativity demonstrated by the Editorial Fellows in conceiving the the Proceedings Wiki, and the value they have added to this scholarly form. Compare what you have just seen on the screens to the old print model of proceedings – for those of you of an age to remember those. They used to get published months, if not years after the event, by which time the conversation had moved on, and then sat forgotten on library shelves.

With Wordle to give this conference's proceedings visual appeal and offer us a quick overview of key themes; with their being available online *before* the conference, and by incorporating discussion threads; these proceedings come alive and start productive conversations, and exemplify and facilitate the whole endeavor of scholarly communication and peer review.

The second and last thing I want to do is to return to my theme of disintermediation.

As a book publisher, I believe there will continue to be a place for scholarly and professional books. Much of what books have done in the past – such as providing information, disseminating tips and incremental ideas, describing processes, and imparting new research results – will migrate to the Web. Books will persist — whether in print or e-book formats – to do those things for which they are pre-eminently suited: for providing perspectives, presenting extended ideas, promoting reflection, making connections between discourses – what I call the narrative of ideas

But publishers like me will *also* have to disintermediate themselves. When it comes to getting teachers up to speed with the practice of a pedagogy, up-dating professionals on new practices, or to engaging students in the exploration of a topic and taking charge of their own learning, we can provide video'd mini-lectures, self-paced tests and self-assessments, simulations, or depictions of phenomena or situations they will encounter in real life. We can adopt multimedia forms to engage students, facilitate active learning, and provide opportunities for repetitive practice.

These are ideas I'm beginning to discuss with a number of authors – and invite any of you who are thinking on these lines engage with me in this conversation. There are not many models, and methods of delivery and dissemination have yet to be developed. At this point, for authors, publishers, librarians, IT personnel, and students, there are more questions than answers. Our future looks both exciting and scary – but who has ever claimed that creative destruction would be easy!